



Educator Vacancy January 2026

Introduction

Screen 21-Educator Vacancy of the MOSIS October Educator Core data collection lists the status of vacant elementary and secondary (not adult) educator positions of full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the areas of Teachers, School Counselors, Building-Level Administrators, and Superintendents.

A vacancy exists if any position needs to be filled for the current school year. This would include any educator that left a district/charter school in the prior year, for any reason, and required a district/charter school to fill or alter that position for the current school year.

The four options available to a school district or charter school for addressing the vacancy are:

- Filling the position with an appropriately certified educator
- Filling the position with an inappropriately certified¹ educator
- Leaving the position vacant
- Altering, eliminating, or changing the position to another position without hiring someone (i.e. increasing student-teacher ratio or student-administrator ratio)

The Office of Educator Quality within DESE uses this information for state reporting purposes such as the Educator Vacancy Report and the Recruitment and Retention Report. More importantly, DESE uses this information to better understand issues and needs regarding Missouri's educator workforce to inform recruitment strategies that support and benefit school districts and charter schools.

The 2025-26 report reflects a 100% response rate of all 556 district/charter schools. These district/charter schools employ approximately 80,000 educators in the state and serve over 897,000 Missouri students.

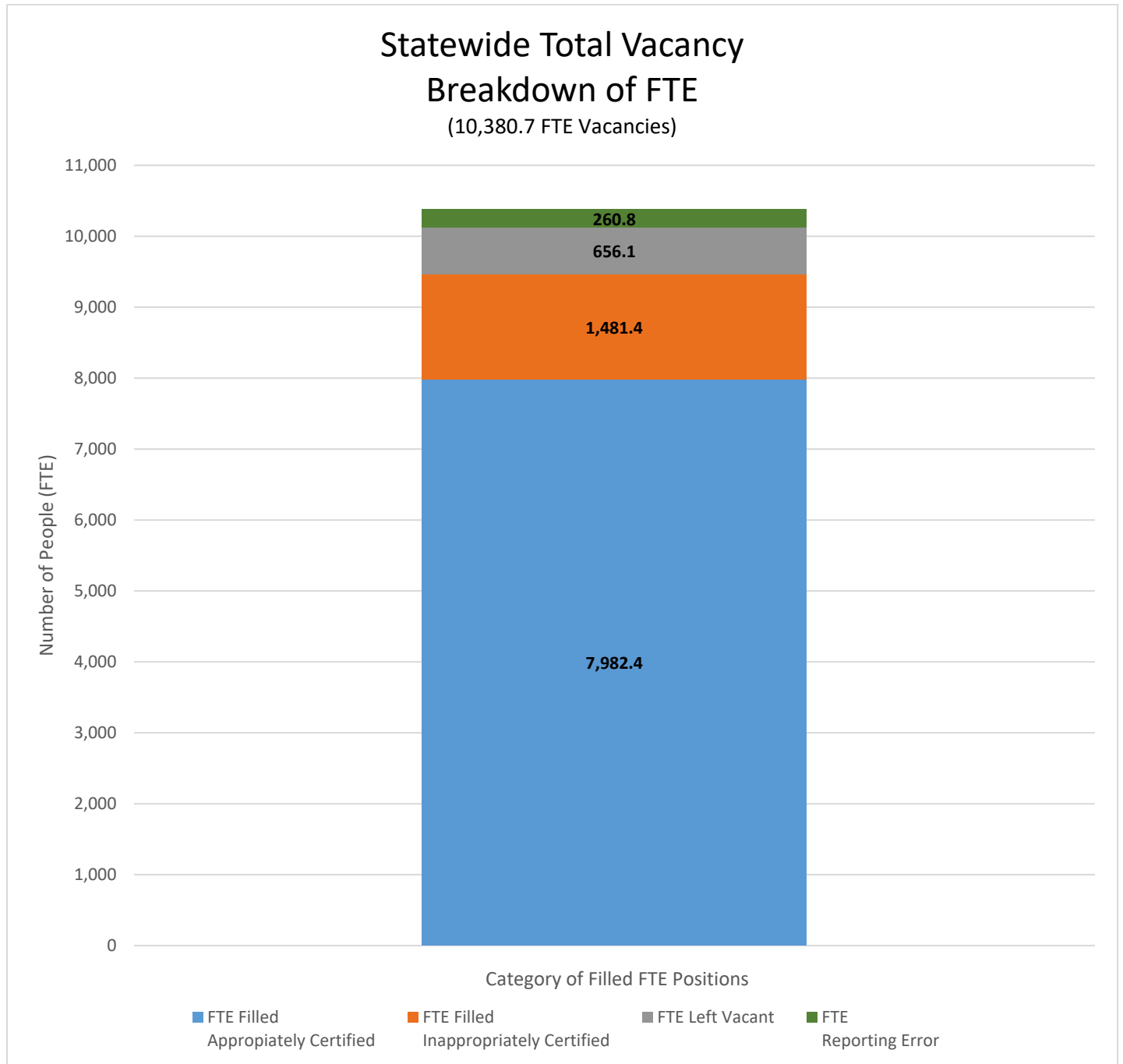
¹ Inappropriately certified is anyone in any subject area or grade level for which they are not certified. (Educators with Temporary or Provisional Certificates would be considered appropriately certified if they are in the correct subject area and/or grade level)

Key Findings

- There were 10,380.7 total vacancies reported by the 556 district/charter schools that employ over 80,000 educators and serve over 897,000 Missouri students.
- Of those vacancies, 7,982.4(76.0%) were filled with appropriately certified educators, 1,481.4(14.3%) were filled with inappropriately certified educators, and 656.1(6.3%) were left vacant.
- The largest number of vacancies for 2025-26 were in the certification areas of Elementary Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood Education.
- Elementary Education was reported with the highest number of vacancies in all nine regions of the state.
- In approximately three-fourths of the nine regions, Special Education and Music - Instrumental was the most common position left vacant while in the other one-fourth of the nine regions, Secondary Mathematics and Middle School Social Science was the most common position left vacant.
- Elementary Education had the highest number of vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators. However, Special Education and Early Childhood Education had higher percentages of vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators.
- Special Education had a higher number of positions left vacant 184.5 and highest percentage left vacant 13.7%.
- The next highest four of the top 20 certification areas with vacancies were:
 1. Physical Education
 2. Language Arts
 3. Secondary Mathematics
 4. Middle School Mathematics
- Many certification areas with lower numbers of vacancies have higher percentages of those vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators. For instance, Language Arts had more vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators, while Art had the highest percentage of vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators.

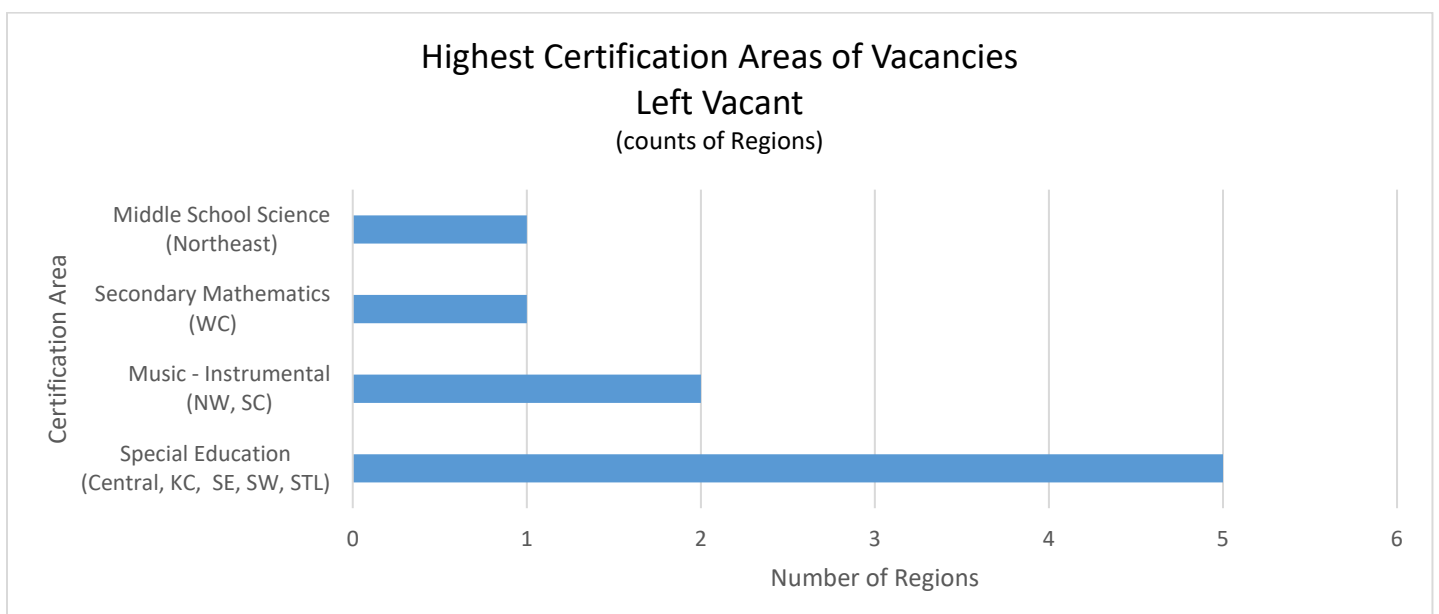
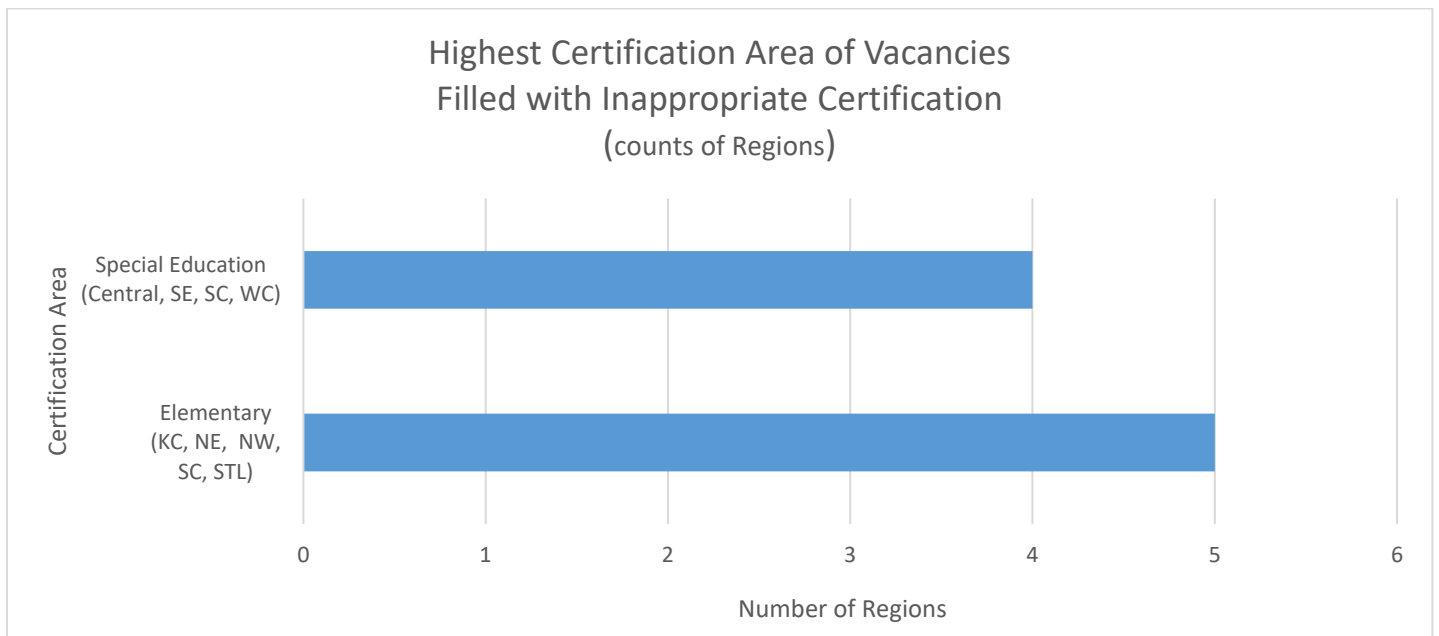
Statewide Total Vacancies

There were 10,380.7 total FTE vacancies reported for the state. The graph below represents the total vacancies reported and the positions that were filled with appropriately certified individuals (76.0%), inappropriately certified individuals (14.3%), and those positions left vacant (6.3%).



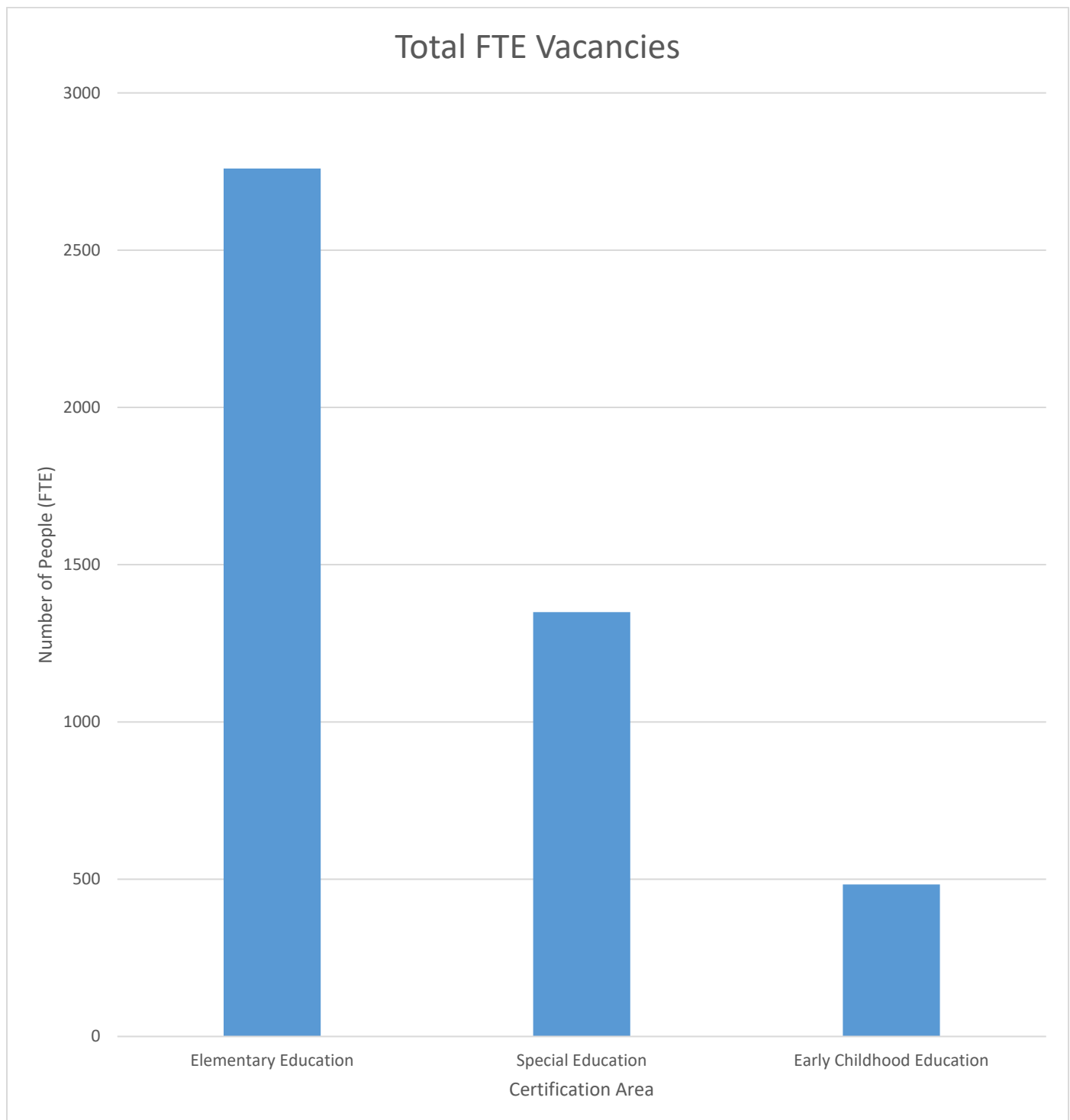
Regional Vacancies

All regions in the state reported Elementary Education as having the highest number of vacancies. Elementary Education (5 regions) and Special Education (4 regions) reported the highest number of vacancies and percentages of vacancies filled with inappropriately certified individuals. Elementary Education was reported with the highest number of vacancies that were left vacant in the regions of Northeast, Southwest, and West Central. Special Education was reported with the highest number of vacancies left vacant in the regions of Central, Kansas City, Southeast, Southwest, and St. Louis. Music – Instrumental was reported with the highest number of vacancies left vacant in the regions of Northwest and South Central. Secondary Mathematics was reported with the highest number of vacancies that were left vacant in the West Central region. Elementary Counselor was reported with the highest number of vacancies that were left vacant in the Northwest region.



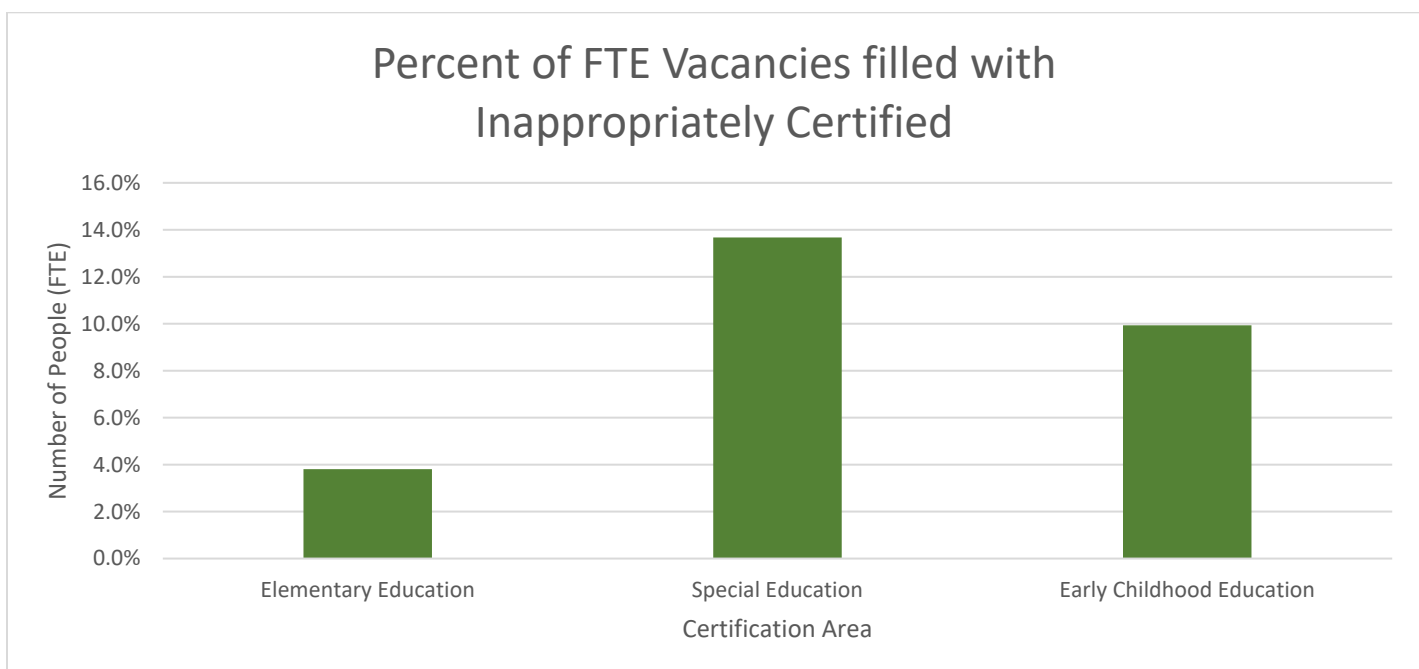
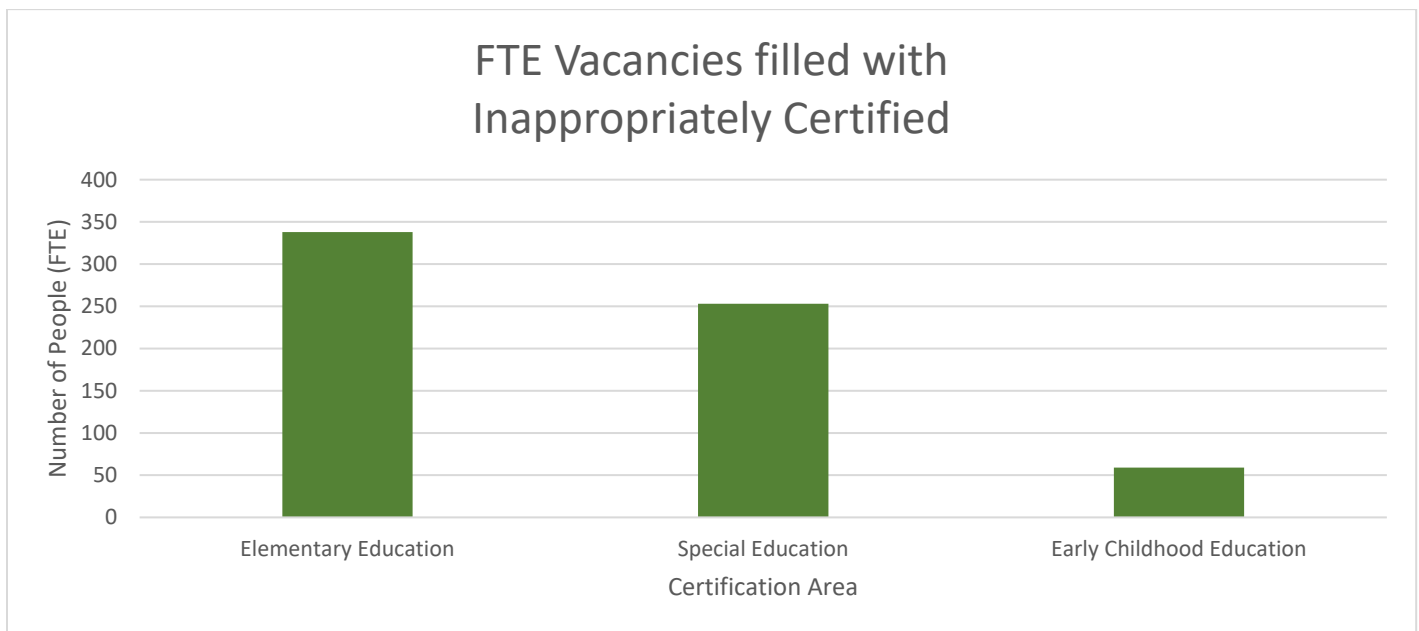
Statewide Total Vacancies

The following graph shows the number of vacancies statewide for the top three certification areas with the highest numbers of FTE vacancies in the state. There were 2,759.5 vacancies in Elementary Education, 1,349.2 vacancies in Special Education, and 483.4 vacancies in Early Childhood Education.



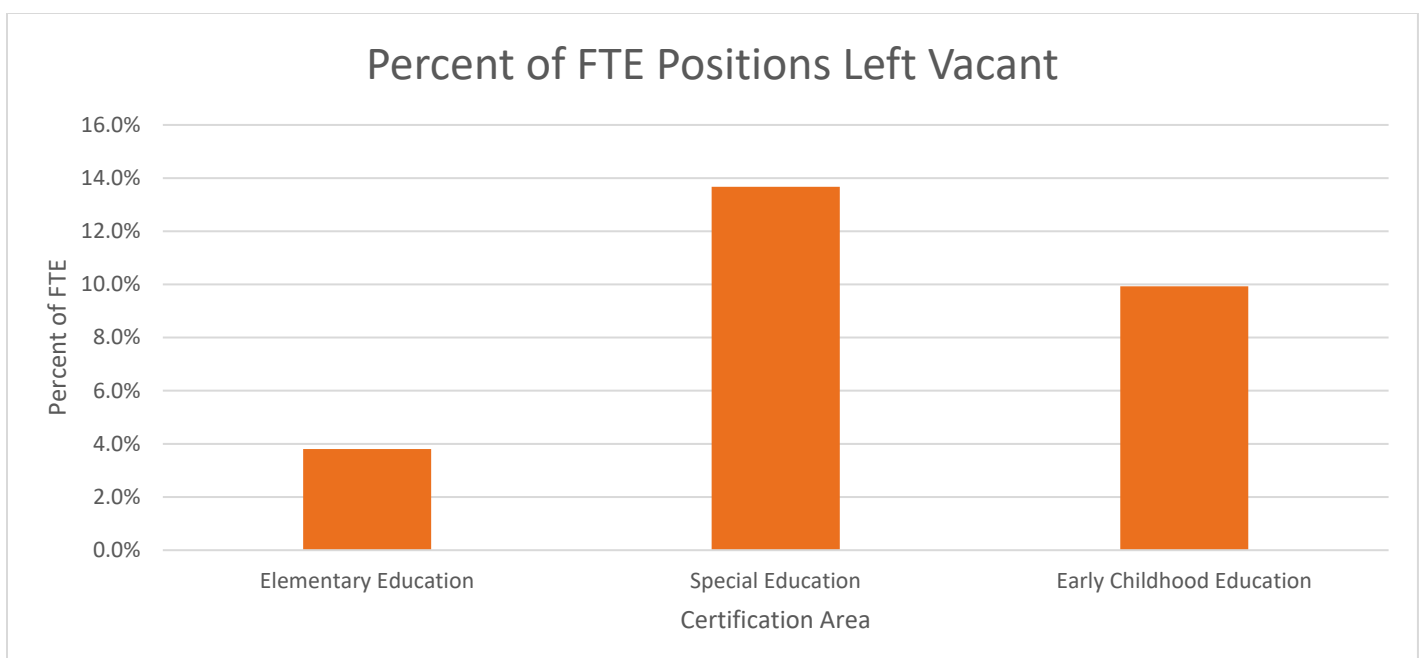
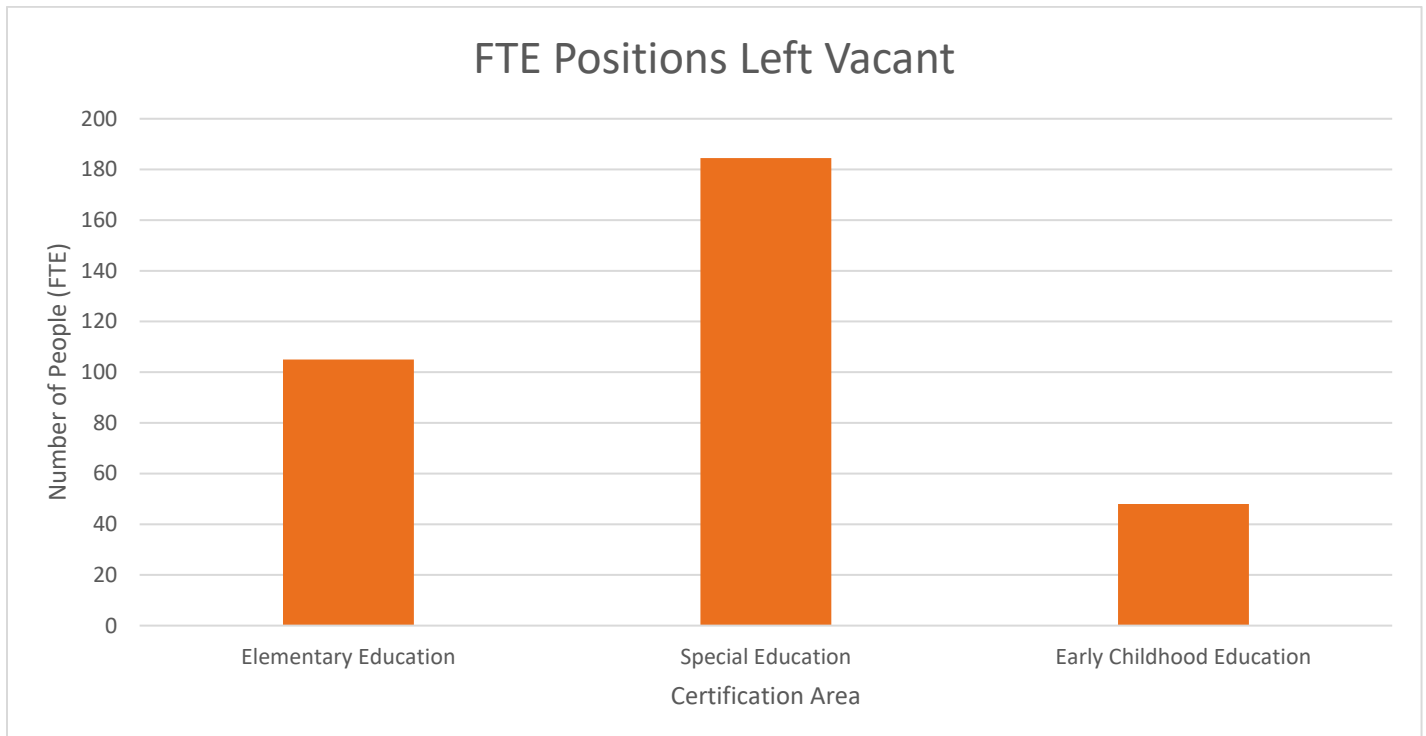
Vacancies Filled with Inappropriately Certified

The first of the following graphs shows the number of FTE vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators for Elementary Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood Education. The second graph shows the percentage of the total vacancies for each certification area that were filled with inappropriately certified educators. For example, of the 2,759.5 total vacancies in Elementary Education, 338.0 were filled with inappropriately certified educators which is 12.2% of the total 2,759.5 vacancies in that certification area. Although Elementary has the highest number of vacancies filled with inappropriately certified FTE, Special Education and Early Childhood Education have higher percentages of FTE vacancies filled with inappropriately certified FTE.



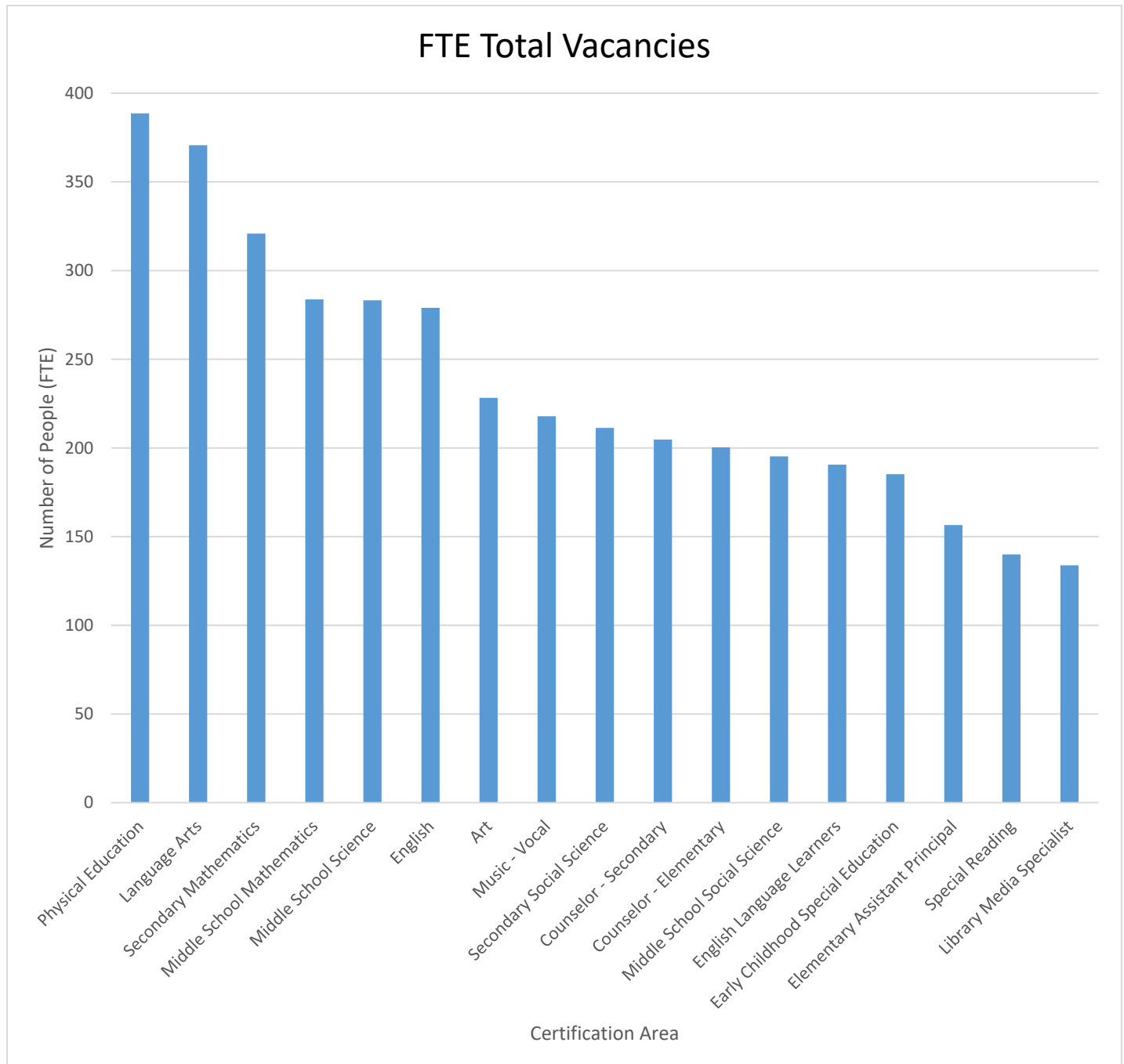
Positions Left Vacant

The first of the following graphs shows the number of FTE positions left vacant for Elementary Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood Education. The second graph shows the percentage of the total positions for each certification area that were left vacant. For example, of the 1,349.2 total positions in Special Education, 184.5 were left vacant, which is 13.7% of the total vacancies in that certification area. Special Education has a higher number of positions left vacant reported and also has a higher percentage of positions left vacant.



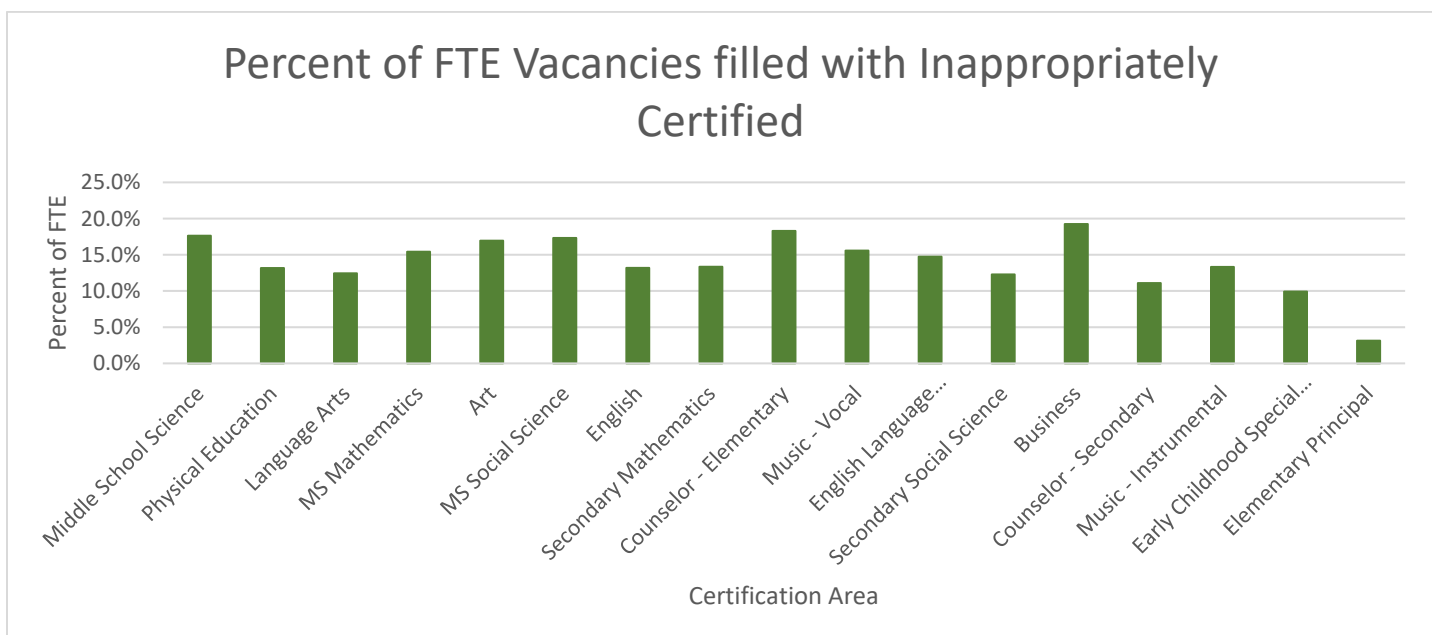
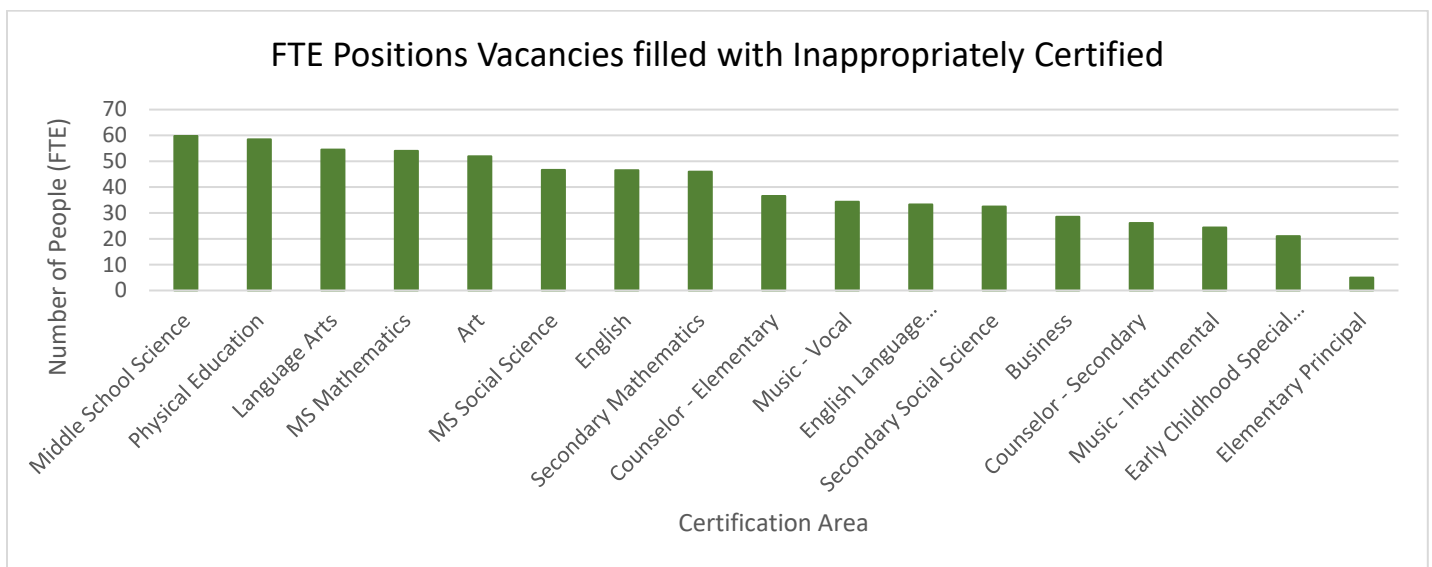
Statewide Total Vacancies Among Top 20 Certification Areas

The following graph shows the number of FTE vacancies statewide for the remaining 17 of the top 20 certification areas with the highest numbers of vacancies in the state in order from greatest to least. The scale on this graph goes from 0 - 400, compared to a scale of 0 - 3,000 on the earlier graph for Elementary Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood Education.



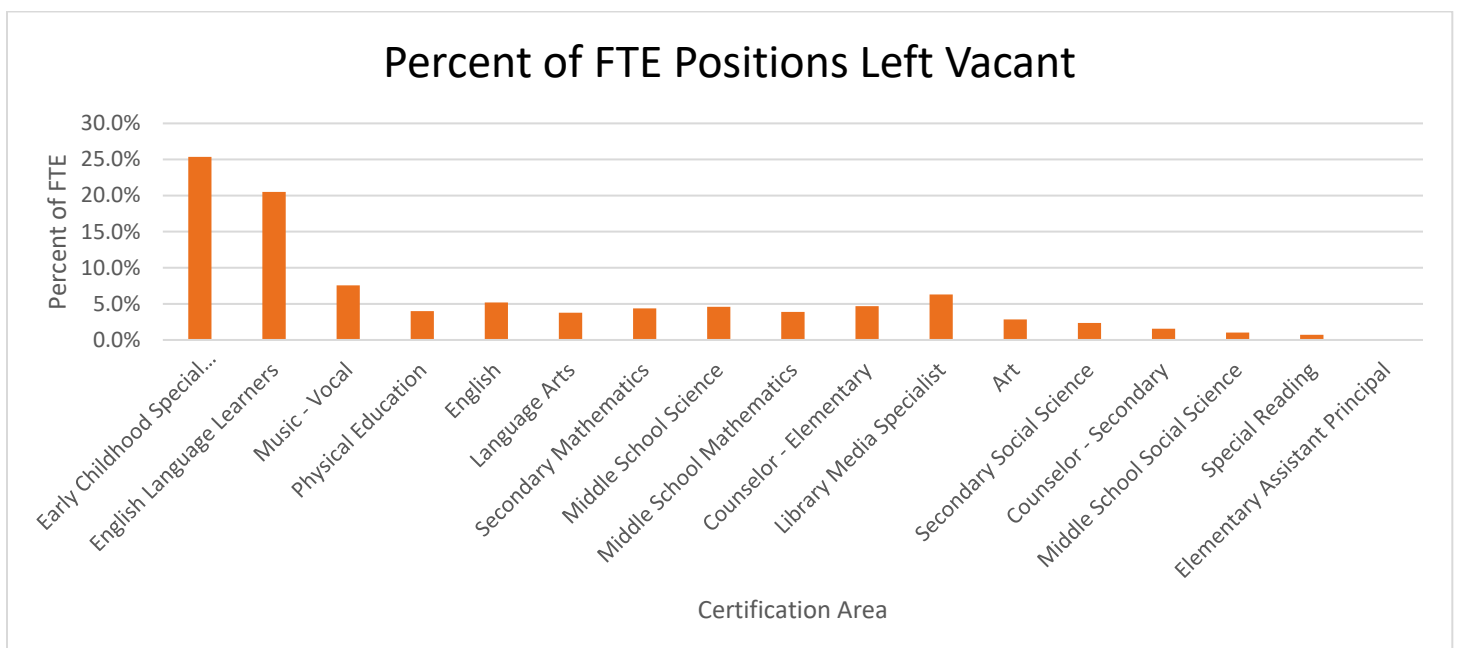
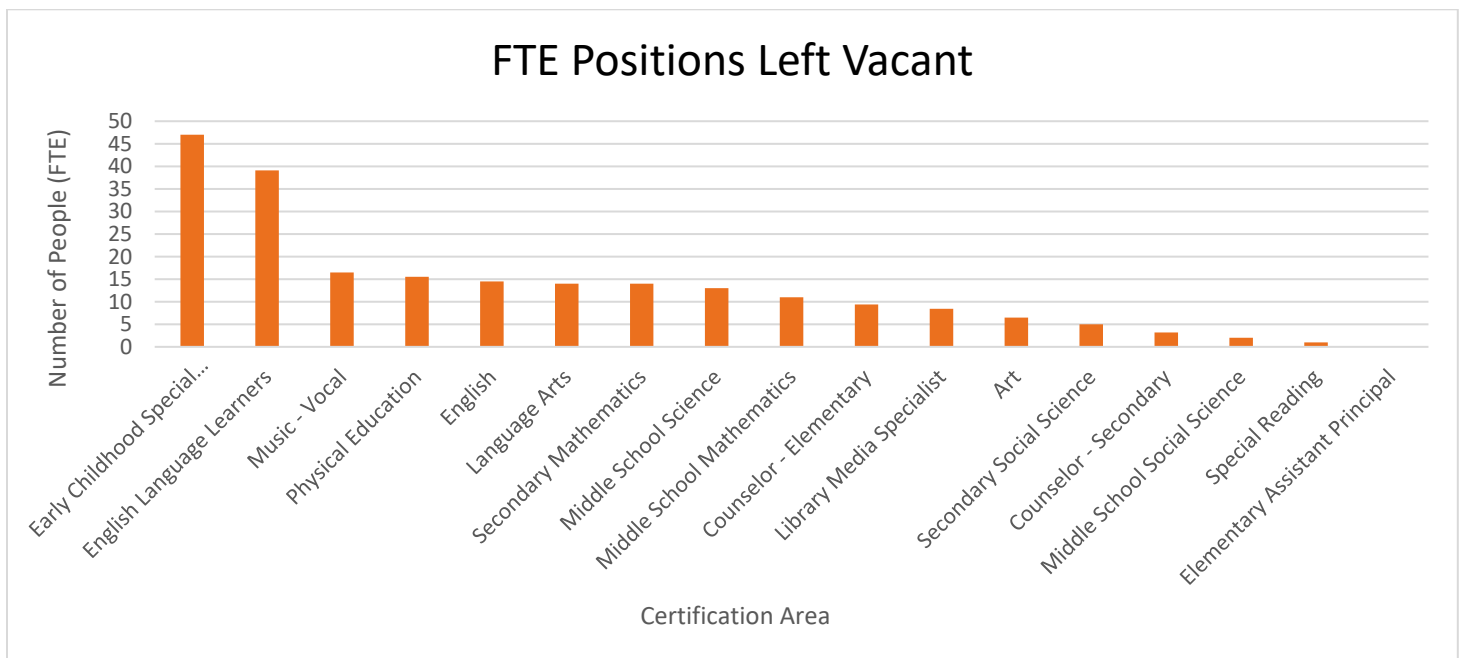
Vacancies Filled with Inappropriately Certified Among Top 20 Certification Areas

On the following graphs, the certification areas are ordered from greatest to least by the number of FTE vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators. The first graph shows the number of FTE vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators for each certification area. The second graph shows the percentage of the total vacancies for each certification area that were filled with inappropriately certified educators. For example, of the 338.9 total vacancies in Middle School Science, 59.8 were filled with inappropriately certified educators which is 17.6% of the total 338.9 vacancies in that certification area. Many certification areas with lower numbers of FTE vacancies have higher percentages of those vacancies filled with inappropriately certified educators. For instance, Business has a lower number of FTEs but has the highest percentage of FTEs filled with inappropriately certified educators.



Positions Left Vacant Among Top 20 Certification Areas

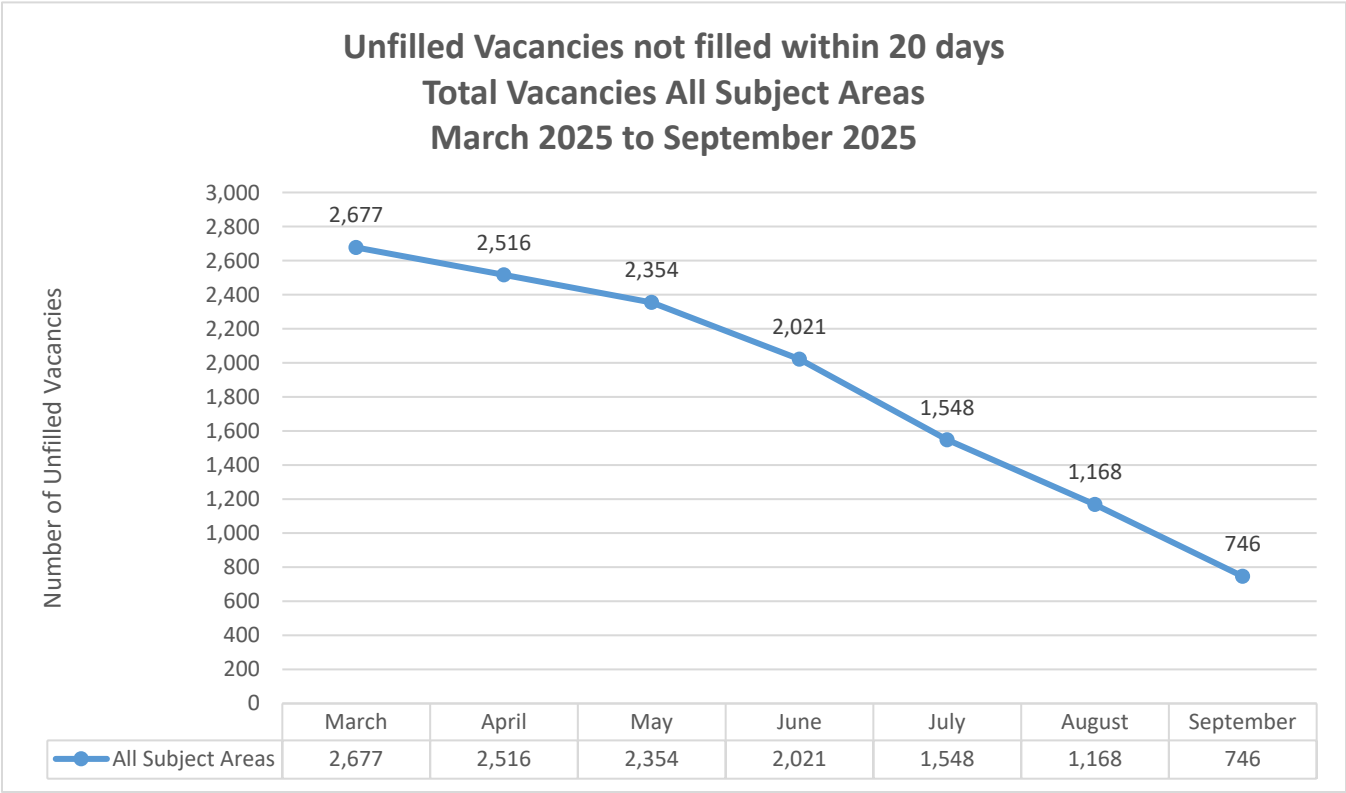
On the following graphs, the certification areas are ordered from greatest to least by the number of FTE positions left vacant. The first graph shows the number of FTE positions left vacant for each certification area. The second graph shows the percentage of the total positions for each certification area that were left vacant. The graphs indicate that both Early Childhood Special Education and English Language Learners have both a high number and percentage of vacancies left vacant. For example, of the 185.3 total positions in Early Childhood Special Education, 47.0 were left vacant, which is 25.4% of the total 185.3 vacancies in that certification area. Similarly, out of the 190.6 total positions left vacant in English Language Learners, 39.1 were left vacant, which is 20.5% of the 190.6 total vacancies in that certification area.



In January 2025, DESE launched a new Statewide Educator Job Board in partnership with **Nimble**. This platform is a one-stop-shop for current and rising educators to find jobs they’ll love in Missouri. It automatically aggregates all teacher postings across the state and gives teachers the ability to find jobs that meet their preferences. They can see critical information, like commute distance and salary scales, all in one place. Starting in January 2026, through a multi-year grant, DESE is able to provide additional recruitment and job search resources to Missouri teachers and schools.

The partnership with Nimble also provides DESE with a real-time supply and demand Data Dashboard to better understand how the dynamics of shortages are changing and the impact of initiatives to reduce those shortages. The methodology for gathering statewide teacher vacancies occurs through a process called job scraping. In this process, posted vacant positions from each school district and charter school participating in the job board are gathered twice each week. This data is used to create the Data Dashboard. The Data Dashboard provides more accurate data to inform state policy and required reporting. It allows us to look at the total positions that were unfilled for 20, 60, and 90 days. We can filter these by subject area, grade band, county, and locale types. The data included in the current dashboard represents 82% of teaching positions and students in the state from 37% of Missouri school districts.

The following graphs show data from the 2025 hiring season, using data from the current Data Dashboard. The first line graph shows the total number of vacancies based on unfilled postings beginning in March and extending through the month of September.



The following graph shows data from the 2025 hiring season using the Data Dashboard. This line graph shows the highest three areas of vacancies based on unfilled postings beginning in March and extending through the month of September.

